



U.S. Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
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FACT SHEET

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER

The Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer (OCAHO) has jurisdiction over four types of cases arising under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), including those involving allegations of: (1) knowingly hiring, recruiting, or referring for a fee or the continued employment of unauthorized aliens, and failure to comply with employment verification requirements in violation of section 274A of the INA (employer sanctions); (2) immigration-related unfair employment practices in violation of section 274B of the INA; (3) immigration-related document fraud in violation of 274C of the INA; and (4) failure to comply with the information dissemination provisions for international match making organizations in violation of 8 U.S.C. 1375. OCAHO is headed by a Chief Administrative Hearing Officer who provides overall program direction, articulates policies and procedures, establishes priorities, and administers the hearing process presided over by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs).

The ALJs hold hearings and related administrative proceedings and render decisions on cases assigned to them concerning the four areas listed above. The ALJs may impose sanctions and penalties as prescribed by law, issue cease and desist orders, award attorney's fees, and, in the case of immigration-related unfair employment practices, award back pay. The Chief Administrative Hearing Officer also certifies, as having received the requisite training in employment discrimination matters, ALJs who hear cases regarding the imposition of penalties against employers who discriminate against any individual--other than an unauthorized alien--in employment-related situations because of that individual's national origin or citizenship status.

The provisions of section 274A of the INA apply to all employers in the United States with regard to all employees hired, recruited, or referred after November 6, 1986, the date of enactment of the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

◆ **Biographical Information**

Michael J. Creppy, Chief Administrative Hearing Officer

Michael J. Creppy was appointed as Chief Administrative Hearing Officer in April 2006. Prior to this, he served as Chief Immigration Judge from May 1994 to April 2006. He received a Bachelor

of Arts degree from Fisk University in 1975, a Juris Doctorate from Howard University School of Law in 1978, and a Masters of Law degree from Georgetown Law Center in 1979. Prior to his appointment as Chief Immigration Judge, Mr. Creppy worked for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) -- from 1988 to 1994, in the Office of the General Counsel as deputy general counsel for litigation; from 1986 to 1988, as associate general counsel primarily focusing on the employer sanctions and anti-discrimination provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA); from 1984 to 1986, as chief legal officer for the INS district office in Los Angeles; from 1983 to 1984, as a trial attorney with the Office of Immigration Litigation, Civil Division; and from 1981 to 1983, as a trial attorney for the INS district office in New York, NY. Prior to joining the Department of Justice, Mr. Creppy served from 1979 to 1981 as a judicial law clerk for the Superior Court for the District of Columbia. He is a member of the District of Columbia Bar.

Louis J. Ruffino
Deputy Chief Administrative Hearing Officer

Louis Ruffino became Special Counsel to the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer in August 1999, and then Deputy Chief Administrative Hearing Officer in February 2000. During this time, Mr. Ruffino served as a special assistant U.S. attorney at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia from September 2004 to April 2006 and at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia from September 2002 to March 2003. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and a Juris Doctorate in 1993 from the University of San Diego School of Law. Mr. Ruffino served as an associate general counsel in the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) from February 1997 to July 1999. He was in private practice before joining OGC in 1997. Mr. Ruffino is a member of the Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia Bars.

Ellen K. Thomas, Administrative Law Judge

Judge Thomas was appointed as an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) in August 1990, and began working at OCAHO in October 1995. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1955 at Oberlin College and a Juris Doctorate in 1973 from Indiana University School of Law. While still assigned to OCAHO, Judge Thomas received a Fulbright grant and served as an ALJ in Bosnia from January to July 2006. She served as an ALJ with the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Social Security Administration, in Evansville, Indiana. She also held various positions in the Indianapolis District Office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Judge Thomas taught at the Indiana School of Law and worked in private practice for several years in Bloomington, Indiana. She is a member of the Indiana Bar.

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